

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY East Germany

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SUBJECT Plans for Increase of Gas and Coke Production

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1. In January 1954, the East German Ministerium fuer Schwerindustrie (Ministry for Heavy Industry), examined the problem of an expansion of the industry in connection with an increased gas production. The plan was to produce about 12,000,000 cubic meters of gas in 1955 and later to increase this production to 20,000,000 or 21,000,000 cubic meters. The idea was to obtain energy from gas produced from coal rather than directly from coal as previously.
2. The "new course" provided for the erection of new carbonization plants to produce gas and coke as well as for an increase in the production of the existing large low-temperature carbonization plants in Central Germany. A new carbonization plant was scheduled to be erected at Kaefernheim because the largest coal deposits of the GDR are located there. Other large installations are to be erected in the Lausitz, where almost inexhaustible coal deposits are available. The latter region was planned to become a new center of the East German industry.
3. The East German industry would lose its coal bases in 40 or 50 years if the present excessive rate of coal extraction were continued. As a result, coal would have to be shipped to the industrial plants involved. For this reason it appears unfeasible to the BUNA and LEUNA works and numerous other industrial plants in Central Germany.
4. Other coal processing plants must therefore be erected in the Lausitz region. It is envisaged to build coking plants, which yield large quantities of gas besides coke which is urgently needed. A large-scale gas delivery system is to be built. In contrast to all previous plans, power stations would be converted to gas burning (e.g. the Klingenberg power station) rather than raw lignite. Large consumers such as the city of Berlin would no longer be furnished with briquettes but supplied with gas. This would be the best solution from an economic point of view. A further benefit would be the elimination of soot in the large cities.

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5. It is also planned to erect, in the vicinity of the briquette plant in Trattendorf one or two large coking plants and to raise the production of the Lauchhammer coking plant to 1,240,000 tons per year. Moreover, it is envisaged to process low-grade brown coal rich in ashes into gas by means of the oxygen-pressure method. Three oxygen-pressure gas producing plants will be included in the next 6-year plan covering the period from 1955 to 1960. One of these new plants will be erected somewhere in Central Germany and the other two plants in the Lausitz region, i.e. near the Greifenhain open pit mine and near the Trattendorf power station. The preparations for the erection of these plants were to begin in 1954. Construction work on one of them was to be started in 1955.

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Comment. Aside from the reasons given in the present report it is believed that East German authorities plan an increase in the production of gas and the expansion of the gas networks for the simple reason that the production of electric energy is insufficient. Heinrich Rau, GDR Deputy Prime Minister, stated that the supply of electric energy in East Germany would continue to be a bottleneck even after the successful conclusion in the Five-Year Plan.

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1. Comment. Probably Mathewitz-Kaeferhain

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